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ABSTRACT

Some recent research on the development of reading materials for bilingual instruction and instruction in English as a second language (ESL) concerning the appropriate language of academic texts and students' self-awareness of the learning process is reviewed, and a plan for the development of an academic reading program is outlined. The plan has three steps, all of which appear to be essential in the development of language, task, and instruction-appropriate activities. The first step is analysis of target goals and tasks students must perform in academic classes. The second is examination of the discourse needed by students to accomplish these tasks. Several conventional and unconventional methods of discourse analysis are available. The third step is the development of exercises for all types of reading tasks. These include three types of exercises: pre-reading, which confers knowledge of the content and organization of a text to assist in comprehension; mid-reading, which assists students in moving through the text by discussing how one reads; and post-reading, which includes comprehension questions and activities to promote elaboration, evaluation, and extension of the text just read. (MSE)

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ON DEVELOPING ESL AND BI-LINGUAL ACTIVITIES TRANSFERABLE TO THE ACADEMIC CLASSROOM

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Some recent research and interest in the development of ESL and bi-lingual reading materials has been focused upon the appropriate language of academic texts and upon increasing the students' self-awareness of their learning processes. This paper discusses a plan for the development of an academic reading program, including task and discourse analysis, and pre-, mid- and post-reading exercices using skills and strategies transferable to the academic classroom.

Not so long ago, it was assumed by many school, university and language institute curriculum designers that there is one English, consisting of all the verb tenses, common function words and a vocabulary limited by a frequency list. It was this English which all ESL and bilingual students had to acquire, regardless of their needs or goals, before progressing into "regular" academic classes with native speakers. There was a prescribed order of skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and a standard set of exercises, consisting mostly of drills. When this was the case, ESL curricular and teacher training were kept separate from the content area classes and concerns.

Now it is widely believed that there are many varieties of English, which vary in lexicon, grammar and discourse-mode concentration, depending upon the roles of the participants in communication, the situation, the event (e.g. a

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lecture or classroom discussion) and topics involved. The English for Specific Purposes and Language Across the Curriculum Movements are built on this premise.

With the new emphasis upon these various types of English, specifiable for student purposes, there has been increased effort in many ESL and bi-lingual programs to make the curricula more relevant, that is, to provide the students a background in the variety of English to which they will be exposed outside of the English language classroom.

There is considerable interest in and excitement about these changes in focus, as presentations with titles such as "ESL Through Subject Matter Instruction," "Developing Content Area-Based ESL Lessons," and "Teaching ESL Through Academic subject Areas: The Vehicle is Content," given at the 1984 Annual CATESOL Convention attest.

Concurrent to and complementary with the concern for English for Specific Purposes/Language Across the Curriculum is the interest in educating students to the learning process, or learning to learn. Whereas with the audio-lingual method, teachers avoided discussing the language or the learning process, having been told to "teach the language, not about the language" (Diller: 1971:9), we are now "emphasizing instruction aimed at improving students' self-control and self-awareness of their own learning processes" (Brown, Campione and Day, 1981:17).

It is the purpose of this discussion, then, to provide an overview of a plan for creating reading activities for the ESL and bi-lingual classroom which are language appropriate, focused upon the tasks which the students must perform in academic classrooms and which emphasize skills and strategies which are intended to make students aware of their own learning processes and of the transferability of the exercises which they perform to the academic classroom. I have chosen to discuss reading, because it is probably the most important of academic skills on the secondary and college level (A. Johns, 1981).

The plan has three parts, or steps, all of which appear to be essential to the development of language, task and instruction-appropriate activities.

Step 1: Task Analysis. The idea of assessing target goals and tasks is neither new nor exclusive to the domain of education. Yet since a thorough, or even a cursory analysis takes time, there are many schools, language institutes, and university departments in which it is seldom or rarely done. Although there are a number of approaches to needs assessment

and some quite sophisticated designs for task analysis (see, e.g. Munby, 1978, Richterich and Chancerel, 1978; Chambers, 1980), I shall mention here a task analysis which can be accomplished by the interested teacher or administrator who is willing to devote the time to it.

In such an analysis, the tasks which students must perform in academic classes are identified. These may include a wide variety of activities, such as listening for different purposes (to take notes for specific information, to use information in other contexts, e.g., to write), writing assignments for different purposes (e.g. to prepare for an objective examination, to criticize or compare with other readings) and using a variety of speaking skills (e.g. asking questions, making reports). Information about the tasks to be performed in representative or required academic classes can be gathered from the more proficient ESL or bi-lingual students, from the teachers of the content area classes, or from direct observation. When I conducted a task analysis, I used questionnaires sent to ten percent of the faculty, randomly selected, because I wanted a large, representative response (Johns, 1981). However, others have used direct observation or videotapes (Vaughan, 2984) or interviews with proficient students (Alford, Moles and Reyes, 1984).

A task analysis can benefit everyone involved. English language teachers, while discussing the activities of the content-area classroom, can make the academic teachers more aware of what goes on in their own classrooms and how they can assist bi-lingual or ESL students in performing the most common classroom tasks. English language teachers can also encourage the academic instructors to be more process oriented, for we, by necessity, are often as interested in process as product. Of course English language teachers and their students can benefit greatly from such an analysis since the ESL or bilingual curriculum will probably become more relevant to the academic classroom as a result.

Step 2: Examination of the discourse: After identifying the tasks which students must perform, it is necessary to look at the actual language which is used to perform these tasks. This examination provides an opportunity for the ESL and bilingual teachers to look closely at the English which students are expected to process and respond to in the academic classroom. For examining the language of reading tasks, the topic of this discussion, teachers look carefully at the textbooks which are required in academic classes (e.g. math, history, science). Ideally, they work with content teachers to select and analyze these.

Although the most common method of analysis is one in

which clusters of features, grammatical, lexical and rhetorical, or a particular text or register are identified.[1] There are a number of other, less conventional methods of analyzing texts as well. One of the most interesting of these comes from an article by Holmes (1983) who is developing teaching training programs in Brazil. His technique is particularly useful if both English language and content-area teachers are working on the analysis.

Holmes suggests examining a few written texts "with great thoroughness, attempting to relate the analysis to what was important in the text" (1983:105). First, those examining the texts take reading notes, then they compare their notes with each other. The purpose of the notetaking is to determine the important content in the text, that is, the main ideas. The text analysts then return to the text for a second exercise in which they determine the relationships among topics and propositions in the text. At that point, notes are graphically organized in the text. At that point, notes are graphically organized and "look more like a tree than a list of items" (1983:93). This activity further assists the notetakers in determining what the important content is, as well as what is introductory, what the author considers new information, and what should already be shared by the reader and author. A third step in notetaking is to depict the text graphically in charts which show the general purposes of the text author, or isolate discourse modes (e.g., definition). For example, for a text which compares the advantages or disadvantages of a particular governmental system, a two column chart can be made with the headings "advantages" and "disadvantages." All of these activities can be replicated in the ESL and bi-lingual classroom and are much more effectively explained when the teachers have done them on their own.

While the teachers work on these projects, they discuss and list words or phrases most necessary for understanding the author's intent. These lists are retained for use in the development of vocabulary and grammar exercises for the ESL or bi-lingual classroom.

Another method of analysis which I have found useful for the examination of textbook readings is "Questions to ask about a textbook" from Clewell and Cliffton (1983). This list of questions includes ones which will aid the content area and English language teacher in assessing the comprehensibility of the reading and in developing exercises for making the text more accessible.

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[1]For a discussion of register, see Chiu, 1973 or Robinson, 1980.

Questions from this list include:

1. Do textual aids (illustrations, heading, special features, format) provide the reader with an overview of the content of the chapter?

2. Do illustrations support or extend the accompanying discourse?

3. Do special features (chapter review questions, pronunciation guide, italicized words) reinforce or supplement important ideas and relationships developed in the discourse?

4. What are the author's assumptions about the reader's background knowledge and experience?

5. If the content is inaccurate, how can students be helped to recognize the inaccuracies and evaluate the information?

6. Are the relationships among the topics in the chapters clear and logical? (pp. 221-222)

In addition to this useful list of questions, Clewell and Cliffton provide a set of summary questions which also assist in the development of appropriate exercises. These questions include the following:

1. What is the best use of the textual aids (headings, italics, illustrations) in this chapter?

2. Can students recognize shifts in the types of discourse (e.g., from definition to example)?

3. What vocabulary words need to be reinforced? What strategies will help students understand the meaning? (pp. 221-222)

Content-area, ESL and bi-lingual teachers, who often automatically perform reading tasks after years of academic study, enjoy and benefit from looking in new ways at the textbooks which their students will have to read, analyzing the probable reading difficulties, and discussing how they might make the textbooks more readable by assisting the students in preparing for and working through the discourse.

Step 3: Development of Exercises. Exercises for all types of reading tasks can be developed for the ESL or bi-lingual classroom. The types of exercises are limitless and will

depend upon the English proficiency level of the students for whom the material is being developed, the academic and language backgrounds of these students (Have they, for example, done much reading in their first languages?), and what is deemed most transferable to the academic classes in which they will be registered. Two references for exercise tasks which have been useful to a number of teachers and teacher trainees are Grellet's Developing reading skills: a practical guide to reading comprehension exercises (1981) and Candlin, The Communicative teaching of English: principles and an exercise typology (1981).

Many exercises can be based upon the analysis of the texts, focusing upon the grammatical, lexical, and rhetorical features of the text which have been identified during the discourse analysis. In this discussion, however, I will look at three more general exercise categories, also somewhat dependent upon the discourse analysis, which follow the reading process: those which prepare students to read (pre-reading exercises), those which assist the students to process the reading (mid-reading exercises) and those which assist students in applying what they have read (post-reading exercises). In all cases, the emphasis is upon skills and strategies which are transferable to the academic classroom and upon making the students aware of the learning processes of readers and of the processes through which they must go if they are to be good readers in their new language. Ideally, the texts for which these exercises are developed should be those from the academic classrooms previously analyzed by the teachers, for authentic texts are very important to maintaining authentic content and organization.[2]

1. Pre-reading Exercises. There is a certain amount of recent research which shows that appropriate prior knowledge of the content and organization of a text assists students in comprehension (Lipson, 1982 and Obah, 1983). Often some of our ESL and bi-lingual students have prior knowledge from reading experiences in their first languages or from previous reading for related classes that can be elicited for purposes of preparation for the text at hand. If the pre-reading exercises are completed in a group, those students who have some knowledge about the reading content can assist those who don't. And, if the Holmes method for text analysis has been employed, the teacher

[2] T. Johns (1974) points out that "with authentic texts, the teacher's responsibility for grading does not disappear; it is, however, transferred from control of the detailed linguistic features of the text to control of the difficulty of the tasks the student is expected to carry out and the amount of assistance s/he is offered."

will also have a good idea of what the author considers given (and therefore necessary for prior knowledge).

The most common questions which elicit prior knowledge are:

1. What does the title mean? What does the title indicate is the topic of the reading? What do you think that the author is going to say about the topic? What do you already know about the topic? Where have you read about this subject before?

2. What do the illustrations, graphs or charts tell you about what will go on in the reading? How are they related to the topic and the headings?

3. Other than the title, what other groups of words appear in bold-face type or italics? What do they tell you about how the topic will be discussed or organized?

Once the students have completed and discussed what they already know before they begin, and how such prior knowledge activities can be used with any written text, they turn to the pre-reading exercises which involve prediction, that is, predicting what questions the author will answer about the topic. Prediction questions are based on the work in schema theory (Anderson, Spiro and Anderson, 1978) which suggests that "we approach (discourse) with a set of expectations about the internal structure. . . that make comprehension and recall more efficient (Mandler and Johnson, from Rand, 1984:377), and the "psycholinguistic guessing game" theory of Kenneth Goodman (1967).

There are a number of ways to go about devising prediction activities. The easiest is to have the students find any questions which appear in the chapter, within the text, or at the end, and use these as the questions that they assume that the author will answer within the text. Often these questions, posed directly by the author of the content-area textbook, require both fact and opinion of the readers. For example, in American Society (1978) a high school textbook used in many California schools, has questions such as:

In what ways have the injustices listed in the Seneca Falls Declaration of 1948 been corrected? (requires fact; "text explicit")

You have studied the right guaranteed by the Constitution. To what extent do you agree with

the Commission on the Status of Women? (1983:172). (requires opinion, based on prior knowledge or facts from the chapters)

In addition to using questions taken directly from an academic textbook, students can learn to develop prediction questions from their prior knowledge, the clues in the chapter (e.g. heading and illustrations), and the first lines of the text which often predict both content and organization of the chapters. For example, if the title of the chapter were "The American Civil Rights Movement," questions could be: What is the Civil Rights Movement? When did it take place? Did it have various stages? Who was involved? How did the government respond? Who benefited? (Content questions). Is the author going to provide a history of the movement? Will s/he compare the movement with other movements? Will s/he classify elements in the movement? (Questions to determine organization)

A list of these questions should be kept before the readers as the reading is being done, so that students can verify whether their question predictions were accurate and where and how the questions are answered in the text.[3]

The pre-reading exercises dealing with prior knowledge and predictions are very important: they are consistent with current reading and schema theory; they force students to ask questions, and they prepare students for and interest them in the reading. These types of exercises are not only part of the process, but are transferable to content-area classrooms. They require little or no preparation for teachers, yet they give the teachers and students insights into what students know and how the students might deal with the text.

Mid-reading Exercises. After completing the pre-reading exercises, teachers move to developing activities that

[3] [Not all questions which students devise are answered in the texts, for a couple of reasons: students may be wrong about their predictions, or answers for questions which students pose may require prior knowledge or inferencing. Pearson and Johnson [1978] have developed a taxonomy of questions for readings, which include those which are "text explicit" [TI], those which are "text implicit" [TI] and those which are "script implicit" [SI]. It may be that our students develop questions of all types. If so, then we have to deal with how each can be answered.]

will assist students to move through the text, exercises in which they talk about how one reads. One exercise that will help students to discover how people read is suggested by Davey (1983) in an article entitled "Think-aloud: Modeling the Cognitive Processes of Reading Comprehension." She suggests that the teachers demonstrate for students how they might go about reading the text: first, by making predictions about the text content and form (see above) and describing the kinds of pictures which are formed in their minds when they read certain words in the text. Then, after reading a bit of text, by sharing an analogy: "To what can I compare this?" Next, by discussing a confusing point: "I don't understand this at all! First the author was talking about civil rights. Now she's talking about the Vietnam War. What's the connection?" Another reading strategy which the teacher can demonstrate is "fix-up": "I'd better reread. Perhaps I had better take a look at the illustration for clues." After the teachers demonstrate how they talk through the text, they write a series of questions which the students can ask themselves as they work through the text: e.g. "Where does the text become confusing? Why? What can I do to overcome this confusion?"

Glosses are "marginal notes written to direct readers' attention while they read" (Richgels and Hansen, 1984:312). Traditionally, glossing involved only the defining of words in the text. Richgels and Hansen (1984) have recently noted that glossing can have a number of purposes, depending upon the skills and strategies which we want students to concentrate upon. Skills can include determining meaning of a word from context, paraphrasing, or identifying sequences of items. Strategies can include establishing a reading purpose, using prior knowledge, organizing the new information from the text or teaching the underlying structure of the text. Though many of these skills and strategies are familiar and have been mentioned here, it is useful for those developing activities to prepare some glossing questions.

One type of glossing question focuses upon the essential vocabulary in the text, asking:

> "What does laser mean? Can you find the definition? What words show that this is the word being defined?

Another asks students to look for sequences of items by having the following as a gloss:

> "The author does not present the events in the order in which they happened. List what happened in the correct order. How do you know that this is the correct order? What words in the text help you to decide?"

A much more challenging type involves identification of the underlying structure of the text, as suggested by Johns and Davies (1983):

> Every reading which describes the structure of something is made up of the same word groups. The author must discuss the parts of the thing being described, the locations of these parts, the functions of these parts, and their characteristics. On your paper, make columns headed by these words: part, location, function, and characteristics. Then go through the reading with your reading group and list all the parts of the structure, their locations, their functions, and their characteristics on your paper.

So mid-reading exercises are devoted to assisting the student in understanding what goes on when people read: how we picture and process vocabulary, how we deal with confusion, and how we discover how the text is organized on a deep or surface level.

Post reading Exercises. In the conventional bi-lingual or ESL reading textbook, a reading is followed by a list of comprehension questions which are often disconnected and do not get to the reading processes which are transferable to the academic classroom. There are other types of post-reading activities which appear to be more beneficial and transferable to a content-area class. For example, post reading exercise types have been divided by Zaher (1984) into three categories: elaboration, evaluation, and extension. I will use the same typology for my discussion here.

In elaboration exercises, students deal with the text itself in new ways. They can "impose meaning on the material to render it more comprehensible" (Brown, Campione and Day, 1981:22). They can paraphrase important parts, summarize the text, or produce a graphic organizer similar to the "trees" mentioned in the Holmes article. They can do traditional exercises with vocabulary, such as clustering items around a superordinate or making a "cline" in which gradations of the same term are listed. They can also produce a debate or role play if the text is appropriate.

In evaluation exercises, students identify those aspects of the text which are most important to them, either because they appeal to them personally or because they are most useful in their thinking about the subject. If

students are sufficiently advanced, they can compare the author's viewpoint with that of another author or critique the reading. Of course, evaluation is several cognitive levels above the elaboration exercises which only demonstrate comprehension and manipulation of the material.

The final set of post-reading exercises deal with extension, closely related to transferability, which allows the students to see the value of reading the text in the lesson as well as the value of using the skills and strategies learned on any text. First, the students focus upon the task analysis completed and think about what they might do with a particular reading in academic classes, (e.g., take notes, transfer what is read to a chart or diagram, write an essay question, answer a multiple choice question, perform an experiment). Exercises are then based upon these activities. When exercises are completed, the students are again reminded that what they have learned to do from the exercises can be applied to any reading. This last point is always stressed so that the students understand that the reading they do in ESL and bi-lingual classes is not isolated from their work in academic classes.

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